

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 28th November 2019

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WARD(S): All

PART I
FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH 2013-2036

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress being made in reviewing the Local Plan for Slough which includes an update on the current housing supply position in Slough.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel is requested to comment on the progress made in reviewing the Local Plan for Slough.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The review of the Local Plan is directly linked to the following priorities in the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

- Housing

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Local Plan will help deliver the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay
- Our residents will live in good quality homes

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications to this report.

(b) Risk Management

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications as a result of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equality impact issues

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The progress on the review of the Local Plan was last reported to this Panel in January this year. This included an update on the Preferred Spatial Strategy.

5.2 Since then there have been a number of developments which directly or indirectly affect the preparation of the Local Plan. These include the publication of the Interim Planning Framework for the Centre of Slough, Heathrow's Airport Expansion consultation and the submission of the Chiltern South Bucks Local Plan.

5.3 There has also been a significant deterioration in Slough housing supply which means that we have failed the Housing Delivery Test and no longer have a five year housing land supply.

5.4 The implications of all of these for the Local Plan are explained are explained below.

Background

5.5 The overall strategy for the Review of the Local Plan is to deliver balanced cohesive growth which meets local needs as far as possible given all of the constraints to development. Our ambition is for Slough to become a place where people want to "*live, work, rest, play and stay*".

5.6 The main conclusion from the Issues and Options consultation was that there are no reasonable spatial options or combination of options that would allow

Slough to meet all of its identified housing and employment needs within its boundaries.

- 5.7 As a result we have prepared the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy in accordance with the Local Plan Objective of meeting housing needs either within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises within a balanced housing market.

Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy

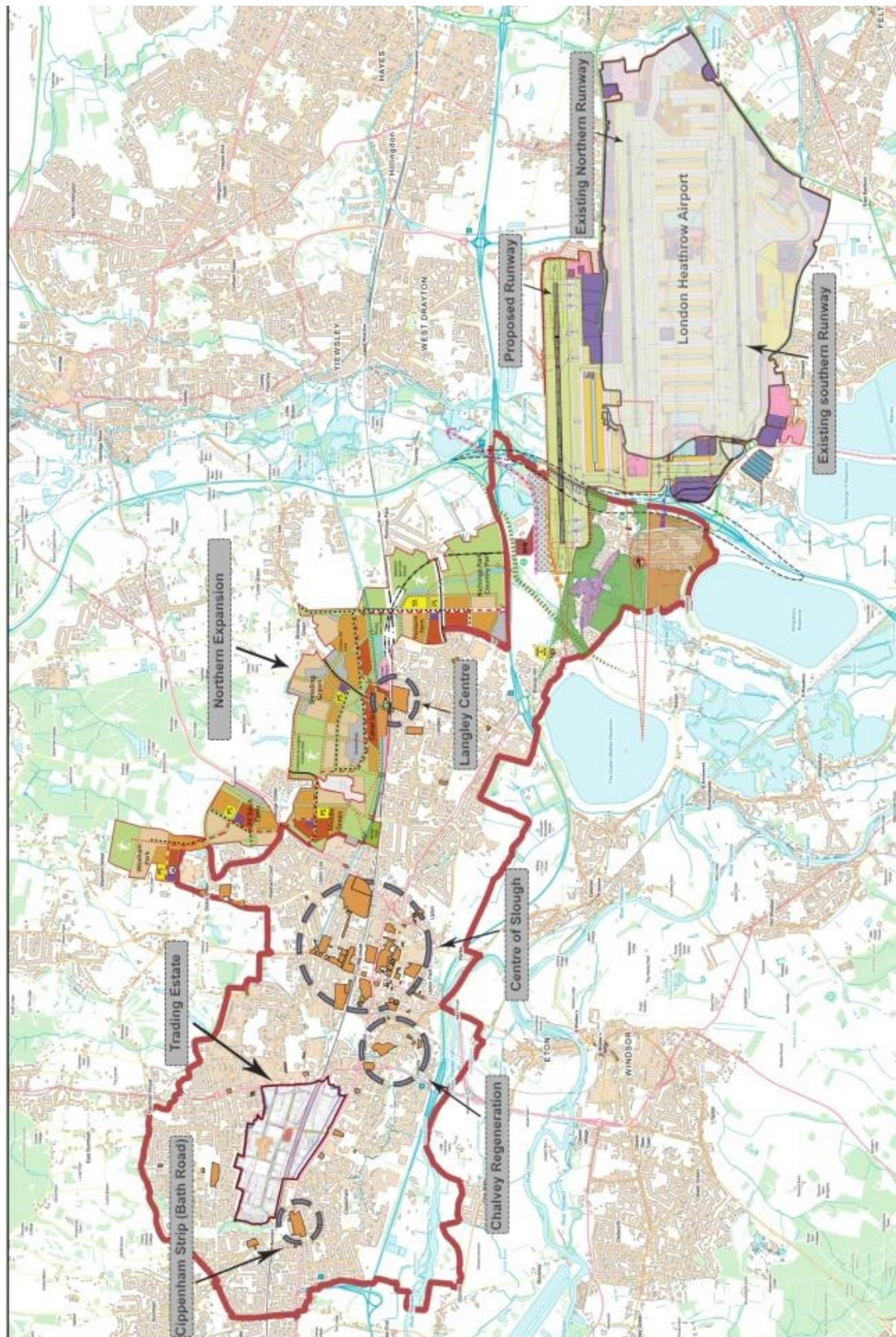
- 5.8 The emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy has been developed using some basic guiding principles which include locating development in the most accessible location, regenerating previously developed land, minimising the impact upon the environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and deliverable.

- 5.9 As a result the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy has the following five key elements:

- ***Delivering*** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
- ***Selecting*** other key locations for appropriate development;
- ***Protecting*** the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs;
- ***Accommodating*** the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigating the impact;
- ***Promoting*** the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a “Garden Suburb”;

- 5.10 A diagram of the Preferred Spatial Strategy can be seen in Figure 1. An explanation of some of the key elements is set out below.

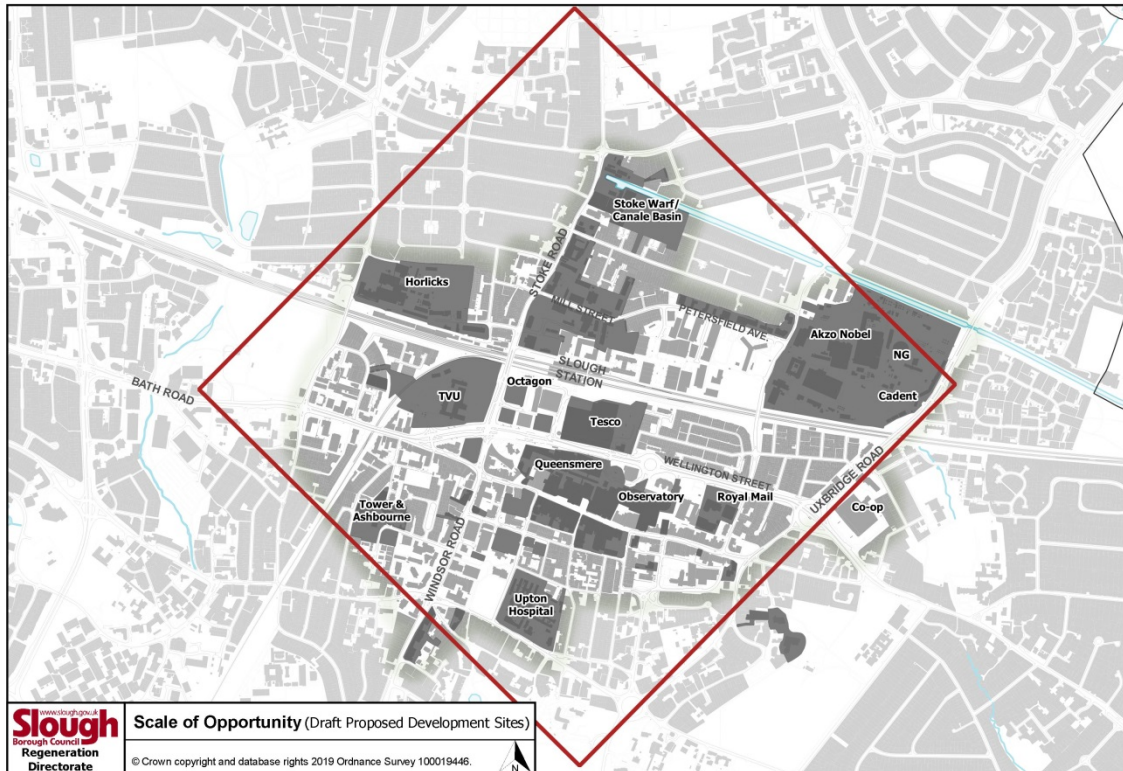
Figure 1: The Preferred Spatial Strategy



Delivering Major Comprehensive Redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”

5.11 One of the key elements of the Preferred Spatial Strategy is delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the centre of Slough. As part of this we have previously identified sites for around 9,000 dwellings within a “Square Mile” in the centre as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Centre of Slough “Square Mile”



Interim Planning Framework

5.12 The next stage was the production of an Interim Planning Framework which was approved in July 2019. This is a “land use” framework which sets out how sites could come forward for development in a comprehensive way. It promotes an “activity” led strategy which seeks to maximise the opportunities for everyone to use the centre for a range of cultural, social, leisure and employment activities which are unique to Slough.

5.13 The main elements for developing such a strategy are already in place. The centre can become a world class transport hub; it has the potential to be a thriving business area and can accommodate a large amount of new housing. It also recognises the aspiration to create a new cultural hub in Slough. All of

these will generate the footfall and spending power that can be captured by a regenerated and revitalised shopping and leisure centre.

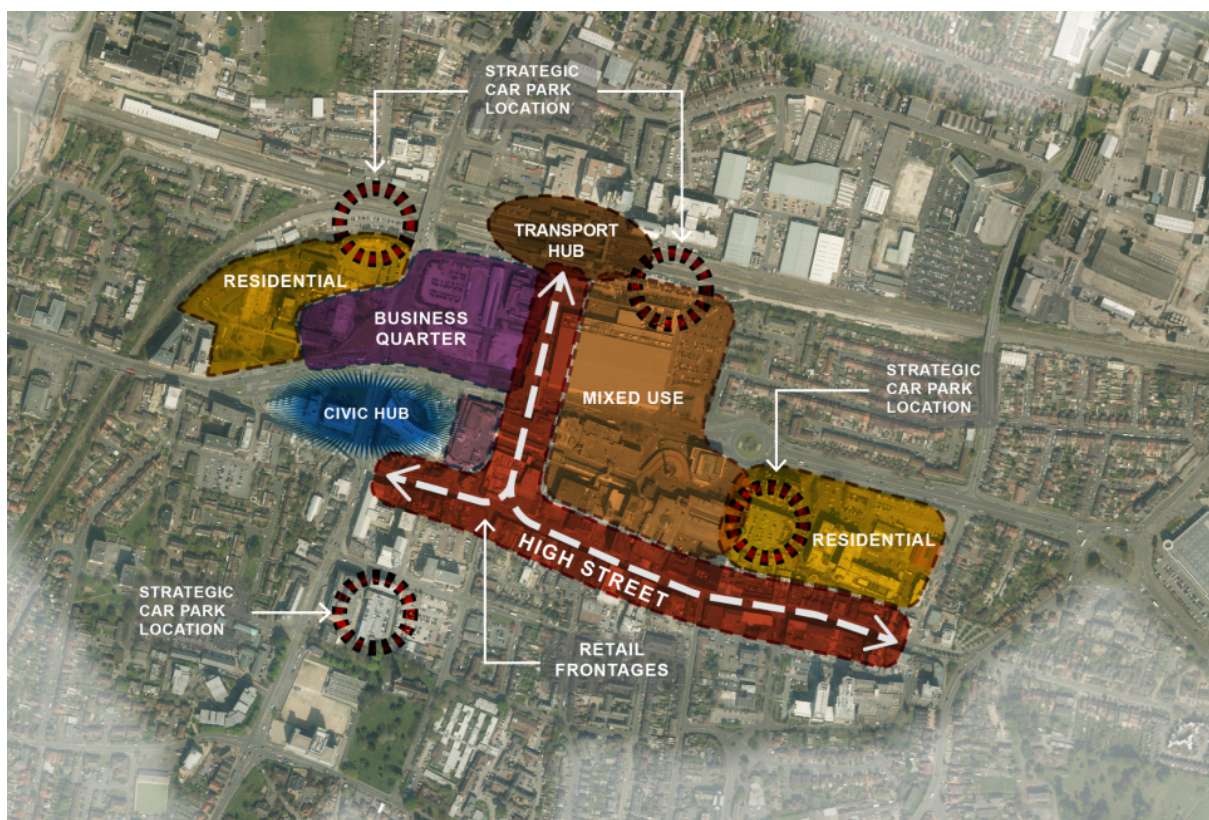
5.14 The Framework promotes the redevelopment of the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres in a way which “rediscovers the High Street” and makes it the focal point. It also proposes to create a new pedestrian street which links the High Street to the station via Mackenzie Square and Brunel Way. This will help to break down the barrier that is currently formed by amount of traffic on the A4 Wellington Street and start to knit the centre back together.

5.15 The Framework also sets out the broad principles for how the centre should look in terms of building heights, street patterns, key linkages and design quality.

5.16 This is the starting point for the preparation of a Regeneration Strategy for the centre of Slough.

5.17 The overall strategy for the Interim Planning Framework is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Interim Planning Framework for the Centre of Slough Overall Strategy



Accommodating the Proposed Third Runway at Heathrow and Mitigating the Impact

5.18 Managing the expansion of Heathrow is an important part of the Local Plan.

5.19 A formal response to Heathrow's consultation on its initial master plan was made in March 2018.

5.20 In June 2018 Slough responded to the Planning Inspectorate on the Scoping Report for the Environmental Impact Assessment which will accompany the Development Consent Order application.

5.21 In order to set out this Council's aspirations for way that the proposed third runway and associated development could be accommodated in the Colnbrook and Poyle area we produced a Spatial Strategy for the area in December 2019. This set out nine guiding principles which should be applied to the expansion of Heathrow. These were:

- Protect Colnbrook and Poyle villages in a "Green Envelope" and enhance the Conservation Area and built realm.
- Prevent all through traffic but provide good public transport and cycle routes to the airport
- Provide for the replacement of Grundons energy from waste plant and the rail depot north of the new runway
- Ensure that there are good public transport links into Heathrow from Slough.
- Enlarge the Poyle Trading Estate for airport related development but with access only from the M25.
- Provide mitigation for the Colne Valley Park and ensure that existing connectivity is maintained through Crown Meadow.
- Develop tangible measures to improve air quality in the Heathrow area
- Ensure that all homes in the Borough that are eligible for noise insulation are provided for under the Quieter Homes Scheme.
- Ensure measures to address flood risk from the proposals include mitigation to reduce the risk of existing flooding for residents and businesses in Colnbrook and Poyle.

5.22 The Colnbrook and Poyle Spatial Strategy was used in discussions with Heathrow about the development of their masterplan and subsequently

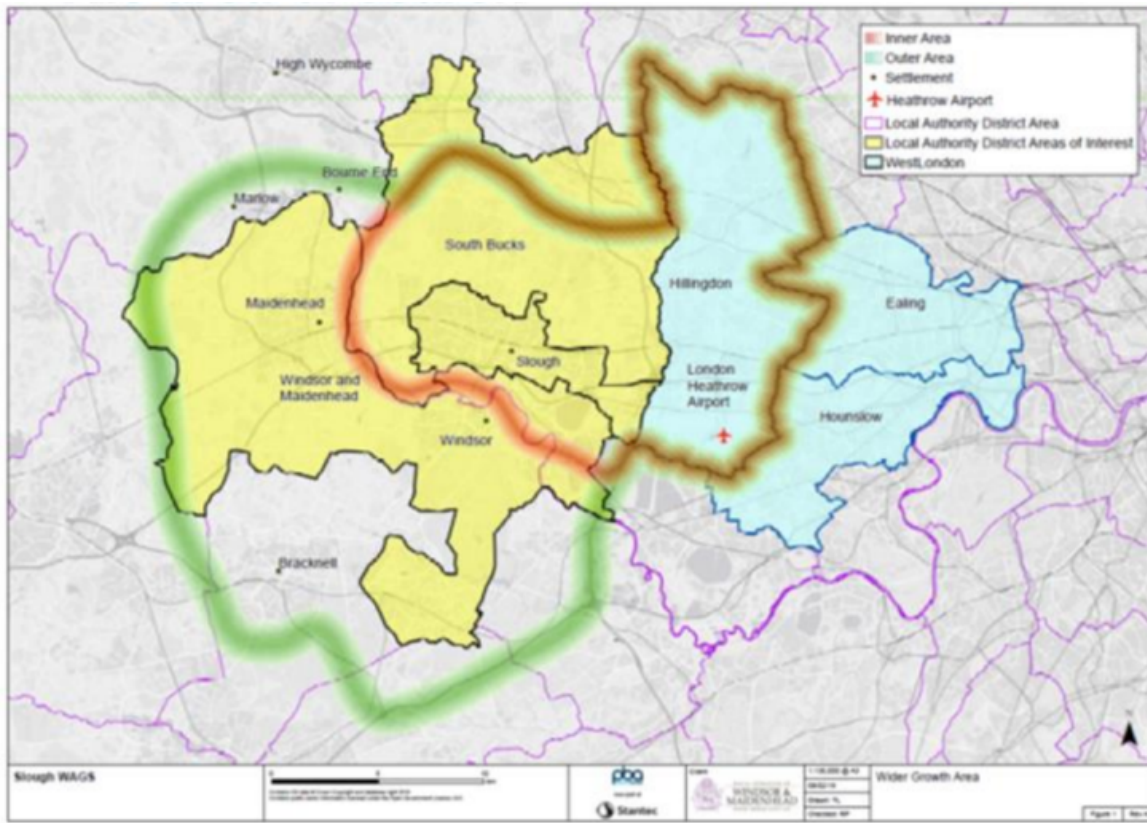
informed the Council's formal response to the Airport Expansion consultation which was approved by Cabinet in September 2019.

- 5.23 The Council is now working with other authorities in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) to produce a non-statutory Joint Spatial Planning Framework for the core area. This will focus upon identifying the future strategic planning issues and opportunities of the Sub-region addressing both background growth and growth projected over the next 30 years and additional growth arising from Heathrow's expansion.
- 5.24 We will use this to identify the potential for Slough town centre to accommodate major new office and hotel development which can support the growth of Heathrow.

Promoting the Northern Expansion of Slough in the form of a Garden Suburb

- 5.25 In order to help promote the northern expansion of Slough, the Council has worked with Windsor & Maidenhead, South Bucks and Chiltern Councils to undertake a joint Growth Study.
- 5.26 This Wider Area Growth Study is being undertaken in two parts. Part 1, has already been carried out by PBA who published their report in June 2019. The purpose of this was to define the geographic area of the study and the area of search for accommodating the future housing needs of the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead core areas.
- 5.27 The Study concluded that the future housing needs of Slough are best met as close to Slough as possible, in areas where house prices are, or house prices in new developments could be, no higher than in Slough and close to areas that Slough residents commute out to.
- 5.28 As a result the Study had identified a very small 'narrow area of search', restricted to parts of adjoining local authority areas plus Hillingdon Borough. The later was included, not because it would necessarily be expected to take net migration from Slough, but because the inter relationship is such that if more housing was built in Hillingdon the net migration outflow to Slough is likely to be reduced. This area of search is shown in Figure 4.
- 5.29 Part 2 of the study will identify the potential locations within the respective areas of search that could accommodate the future housing need growth of the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead core areas, in line with national policy, regardless of administrative boundaries.
- 5.30 As part of this work a draft Local Housing Needs Assessment has been produced by GL Hearn which identifies a potential shortfall of 4,300 homes in the southern part of South Bucks over the next 20 years. This is in addition to Slough's potential unmet need which has been identified below.

Figure 4: Area of Search for Meeting Unmet Housing Needs



5.31 The results of the Wider Area Growth Study will be submitted to the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan examination in support of this Council's request that there should be an immediate partial review of the plan to bring forward the Northern Expansion of Slough to meet unmet needs from South Bucks and Slough.

5.32 The initial questions raised by the Inspectors who are holding the examination have asked why Chiltern and South Bucks are seeking to deal with this issue though a review and not part of the plan?

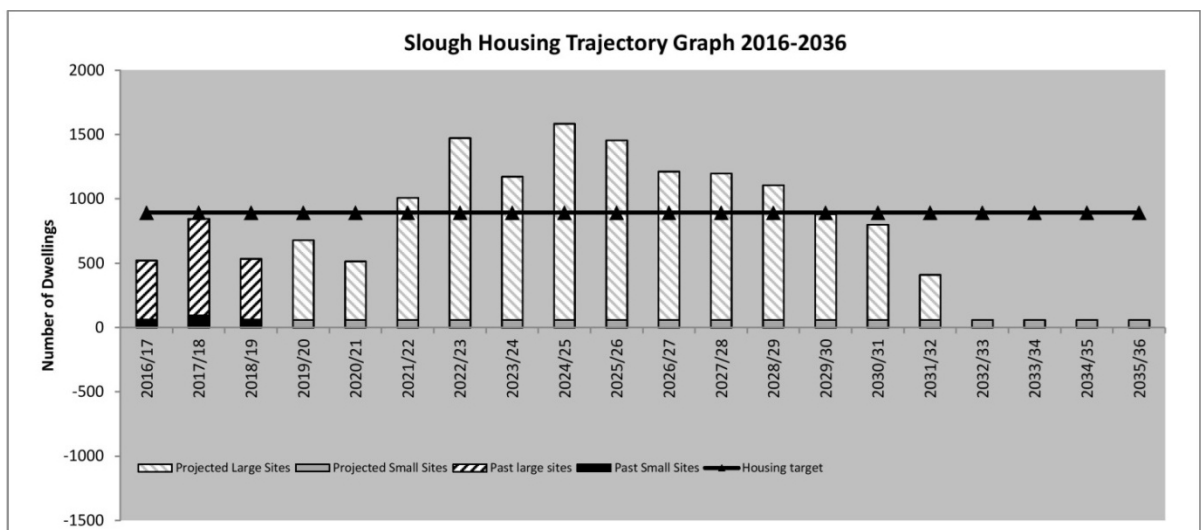
Housing Supply

5.33 One of the biggest issues facing the review of the Local Plan for Slough is how we can maintain our housing supply.

5.34 The monitoring report shows that 534 net additional dwellings were completed in Slough in 2018/19. There were actually 585 new builds last year but 51 were lost due to demolitions or change of use. The average net completions over the last 5 years is 654 dwellings per year.

- 5.35 Housing targets for Local Plans and 5 year land availability calculations are now required to be calculated using the Government's new standard methodology published in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance. This takes account of household projections and affordability ratios published by the Government.
- 5.36 The latest Local Housing Need figure for Slough is an average of 893 per annum. This is the figure that will be used for the preparation of the Local Plan and five year land supply calculations.
- 5.37 There are a number of housing schemes in the pipeline with 858 under construction and 1297 with planning permission that had not started by April 2019.
- 5.38 This is not, however enough to provide the five year land supply that is required by the national Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As at April 2019 we only had a 2.1 year supply of housing.
- 5.39 This means that, in accordance with the NPPF there now is a presumption in favour of granting all planning applications for housing development.
- 5.40 Looking further forward the updated Housing Trajectory for 2016 to 2036 in Figure 5 below shows that from 2030 onwards no potential major housing sites have been identified. Overall it is expected that, after applying a discount rate for sites coming forward there could be a shortfall of around 6,000 dwellings compared to the Local Plan housing requirement. This is why the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy is promoting the northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks to assist Slough meeting local housing needs as close as possible to where they arise.

Figure 5: Local Plan Housing Trajectory for 2016 to 2036



Next Steps

- 5.41 We have produced a new Local Development Scheme which sets out a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 5.42 This is partly dictated by events that are outside of our control such as the need to wait for the Secretary of State's decision about the third runway and the need to consider the outcome of the Chiltern and South Buck Local Plan examination.
- 5.43 We aim to put a report to Planning Committee on the update to the Emerging Preferred Strategy in February 2020 and go out to consultation in Summer 2020.
- 5.44 Key milestones identified in the LDS in May 2019 can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Local Development Scheme Key Milestones

Key Milestones	
Evidence Base preparation	2015 ongoing
Call for Sites consultation	January 2016
Issue and Options Consultation	January 2017
Preferred Options Consultation	February 2020
Publication	Summer 2021
Submission to the Secretary of State	Winter 2021
Independent examination	Spring 2022
Receipt of binding report	Summer 2022
Adoption	Summer 2022

6 **Conclusions**

- 6.1 This report explains the progress that is being made with the review of the Local Plan for Slough and what the main issues are. It also sets out the latest timetable for next stages of the plan making process.

7 **Background Papers**

None.